

America, and that is why this nomination is so important.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, Calendar No. 475; that the Senate vote on the nomination; the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the Record; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session, all with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Corey Hinderstein, of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, National Nuclear Security Administration.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Hinderstein nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

## LEGISLATIVE SESSION

### NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session. Mr. KING. Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. LUJÁN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BUILD BACK BETTER

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, our Democratic colleagues in the House and, to some extent, here in the Senate have talked about how the so-called Build Back Better legislation is popular, but I think the main reason it is popular is because, frankly, many Members of Congress and certainly the public at large don't know what is in it. So I would like to spend just a few minutes talking about that.

First of all, there is the size of the bill. Originally, the Budget Committee chairman, the Senator from Vermont, floated a \$6 trillion spending bonanza.

This, of course, was on top of about \$5 trillion we spent last year in a bipartisan fashion dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. But, of course, this \$6 trillion more was designed to be passed with a pure party-line vote through the reconciliation process.

After some pushback, the \$6 trillion figure that Chairman SANDERS proposed was cut back to 3.5, and now our colleagues in the House and elsewhere are touting a new pared-down bill which spends only—and I underline the word “only”—\$1.75 trillion. I dare say that is a number that none of us can fully comprehend given its magnitude, but it has become—sort of rolls off our tongues like everybody understands what a trillion dollars is like everybody knows what a million is or a thousand or a hundred or ten dollars. But it is an enormous number.

As our colleagues have slimmed and trimmed this bill to reach a pricetag that could get consensus in the House, some of their favorite provisions have fallen off the chopping block. They realize that programs like free college actually cost a whole lot of money. So to live within this new number, which I will talk about in a moment, Democrats in the House kept cutting and cutting, but they found—instead of real cuts, they found another solution to their problem of a topline. What they have basically done is to create the illusion of a lower pricetag without making any real, substantive, long-term cuts. How do you do that? Well, it is the old-fashioned way; it is called budget gimmicks.

Rather than remove these expensive programs entirely, they chose to create a number of arbitrary cliffs, sunsets, and expirations. That way, they could pretend to pass these bills at a lower cost with the tacit promise to continue them at another time and on another day.

One example of this was the expanded child tax credit. Our Democratic colleagues originally crafted this as a temporary measure in their partisan bill that became law in March, just 8 months ago. The first payments had barely gone out the door when they decided to call for making those temporary provisions permanent in the BBB, the so-called Build Back Better bill. Our colleagues knew that a permanent extension and expansion would have been far too expensive to meet their topline, so they pretended to cut it by making it a temporary extension.

Earlier drafts of this bill would have extended this policy through 2025. As time went on, the pricetag was still too high, so it was scaled back to a 1-year extension. But the truth is, nothing has really changed. Calls to make the expansion permanent have not gone away. I have seen no indication that our colleagues across the aisle are content to let this extension expire after just 1 year.

The same is true of the earned income tax credit, which also was expanded in March. A number of our col-

leagues have spoken here on the Senate floor about the need to make this expansion of the earned income tax credit permanent.

But the not-so-temporary extensions don't end there. This bill extends the Affordable Care Act's premium tax credits through 2025, which our colleagues claim will enable more Americans to afford healthcare coverage. But at the same time, this bill cuts funding to safety net hospitals and States that did not expand Medicaid. If their goal was to expand access to low-income individuals under the Medicaid Program, their bill cuts that funding to safety net hospitals in States like mine that did not expand Medicaid. These cuts specifically target hospitals that treat underinsured and uninsured patients.

In short, our colleagues are manipulating the budget process in a way that appears to extend access to healthcare while at the same time cuts funding to our most vulnerable patients—all in the cause of pushing America closer to a single-payer system, something like Medicare for All. I have no doubt that our colleagues across the aisle will, if possible, not let these temporary provisions expire.

In the immortal words of Ronald Reagan, though, “The closest thing to eternal life on earth is a [temporary] government program.”

We have seen this movie before, time and again. It is smoke and mirrors. It is budget gimmickry. It is starting new programs and claiming to cut them off after a year, knowing that, inevitably, Congress will be tempted to extend them much, much longer.

Well, before this bill comes to a vote in the Senate, I hope our Democratic colleagues will agree with me that we need to know precisely how much this bill will cost the American people. We know that our colleagues across the aisle have struggled to try to make a \$6 trillion bill appear to be a \$3.5 trillion and now a \$1.75 trillion bill, but I don't think anybody is really fooled or confused. Because they have strategically chosen start dates, sunsets, and expiration dates to make it appear that these programs cost less, we know that eventually, if they have the votes, they will be extended through eternity.

Our colleagues gamed the Tax Code to partially fund the bill while handing out massive tax breaks to millionaires and billionaires. I am glad to see the chairman of the Budget Committee say that we really shouldn't be focused on tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires in blue States and cities like New York or San Francisco, which is exactly what the Democratic bill tries to provide—tax cuts to millionaires and billionaires in blue States.

This bill is really chock-full of inconsistencies. It claims to extend access to healthcare while cutting off access to Medicaid or some of the safety net programs in States like mine. It claims that, well, we are going to tax the rich folks while at the same time providing